

interested him; it is as if he had remained
 arrested at a stage
 where he needed a maternal figure in his
 life. Apart from
 that, safety lay for him in a savage solitude. It
 was in vain
 that Louise Colet tried to encroach on his
 seclusion and
 draw him from his mother's roof to Paris. He
 became at
 every attempt as fierce as a wild thing at
 bay. It was
 enough, he exclaimed, if they met once in ten
 years; and
 when their relations plunged to the break
 inevitable with
 such a lover, Flaubert showed in the final
 parting at Crois-
 set a 'durete altiere', to use Louise's phrase,
 that shocked
 even his mother. 'La rage des phrases t'a
 desseche le
 coeur', said the old lady to him once. Yet it
 was not really
 so. His friendships were devoted; and when
 his niece's
 husband failed financially, Flaubert sacrificed
 his own for-
 tune to save him with the quiet generosity
 of a prince.
 His hardness was the ferocity of the
 woodland creature
 suddenly in terror for its liberty and its
 offspring. He *must*
 write; he *must* be free. Yet Life took its
 revenge in the
 end. His niece relates that in later days he
 was found once
 kneeling before a child, in tears—'Voila ce
 qu'il m'aurait
 fallu'. Significant, too, is his own comment,
 in a letter,
 on this loneliness of his last years: 'J'ai ete
 lache dans ma
 jeunesse, j'ai eu peur de la vie. Tout se
 paye/ The
 Amazon had not foreseen that the breast she
 seared in
 youth might ache in age; and ache the more
 bitterly with

the consciousness that it had been sacrificed,
in part, not
for battle but for flight. Behind the feud of
Flaubert with
the world, behind his rational scorn of its
stupidity, his
aesthetic contempt for its ugliness, lay also,
it would
seem, an abnormal and unreasoning fear of
it.

But it is this rage against reality rather
than its causes,
and its effect on his works rather than on
his life, that
matter to posterity. It combined with his
passionate love
of beauty to drive him from life to art. It
might have been